



AAC Publications

Machu, Southwest Ridge, Attempt

Pakistan, Karakoram, Hispar Muztagh

In June, Aiden Laffey and I attempted Machu (6,630m, 36.234967°N, 75.051874°E) in the Hispar Valley. As far as I could ascertain from the Internet and from talking to the locals, it had not been climbed or attempted before. From Hunza we traveled by jeep to Hispar village, where we hired porters. In one day we crossed the Hispar River by a single-cable bridge and climbed steeply for 1,400m to a base camp near some shepherd huts at 4,442m in the Machu Valley. A cook and his assistant remained with us at base camp.

We made two carries to set up an advance base camp on the Machu Glacier at 4,760m. There was only a short difficult section to get onto the glacier.

Our aim was to climb the southwest ridge of Machu to a col and follow the continuation west ridge to the summit. We climbed a 700m couloir to reach the southwest ridge at 5,530m. Heavy snowfall forced retreat, but we left our tent on the ridge. We returned and climbed to 5,650m, where we found our way blocked by a rock peak with difficult ground to circumvent it. We again retreated.

Observations from above advanced base indicated that another couloir farther up the Machu Glacier would lead to the southwest ridge beyond the rock peak. Unfortunately, this couloir did not look safe in the prevailing conditions and so we abandoned our attempt.

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Images



Machu's southwest face with the west ridge on the left. The southwest ridge and the line climbed to reach it in 2017 are off picture farther to the left.

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